



Agricultural Advisory Committee

Recommendations for CED Adoption

WESTERN GROWERS

Tom Nassif

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President and CEO

Western Growers

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The Process

- AAC consists of 32 members that represent the major sectors of California agriculture
- Inaugural meeting was held in Sacramento on March 25th, 2008
- Decided to structure AAC into subcommittees that would focus on specific issue areas
- Began by asking each member to provide us with list of key topics
- Created eight subcommittees based on member feedback
- Chair and members were selected based on expressed interest



The Process

- Chair of each subcommittee worked with Western Growers staff to develop an agenda for the initial conference call
- Followed up with series of conference calls and email exchanges
- Each subcommittee identified several recommendations for AAC to consider
- Recommendations were submitted to AAC using an online survey program
- Provided opportunity for discussion and dialogue on each recommendation



The Process

- Recommendations receiving near-unanimous support were presented to AAC for vote at our second meeting in Sacramento on October 9th, 2008
- Hosted roundtable discussion and brought in the Secretary of CDFA and top bureaucrats from several regulatory agencies
 - Cal/EPA, Department of Pesticide Regulation, Resources Agency
- Roundtable panel gave AAC members an opportunity to discuss the impact of current regulations on California agricultural industry with key decision makers

A background image showing a green combine harvester in a field with several people standing around it. The image is slightly faded to allow the text to be prominent.

Agricultural Communications Summit

- Agricultural Communications Summit was held at the Wine and Roses Country Inn in Lodi on November 5th, 2008
- More than 85 California agricultural leaders attended summit
- Provided forum to discuss greater collaboration in developing common message points
- Task force of volunteers is working on identifying the key agricultural issues that will be addressed and developing common terminology and messaging points
- Plan for implementing these messages will be presented at follow-up Agricultural Communications Summit in Sacramento on March 24th, 2009



Recommendations

Immigration and Farm Labor

1. Seek the public support of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Lt. Governor John Garamendi and the California Congressional Delegation for immigration reform for agriculture.
 - Specifically, for support of federal legislation, including the Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits and Security Act (AgJOBS) and the Emergency Agricultural Relief Act (EARA)
- Additional public support must be secured, including from the state administration and California Congressional delegation
2. Support federal comprehensive immigration reform, as opposed to federal agency or individual state solutions to the immigration problem.



Recommendations

Immigration and Farm Labor

- Immigration reform for agriculture must be part of federal comprehensive immigration reform
- Federal agencies and individual states have begun providing their own piecemeal solutions
 - Department of Homeland Security is attempting to finalize its Social Security No-Match Rule
 - Individual states across the country have begun passingTM employer sanctions laws
- AgJOBS and Emergency Agricultural Relief Act
 - Negotiated in bi-partisan fashion and has support of both labor unions and business groups
 - Provides agriculture with legal, stable workforce and reforms an unworkable H-2A guest worker program



Recommendations

Legislative and Regulatory Compliance

3. Support a policy that requires all environmental regulations that impact agriculture to be based on the latest and most relevant research in the areas of science and technology, conducted by credible third party sources and peer-reviewed by academia.
 - Environmental rules and regulations are necessary and vital to sustaining natural resources
 - Rule-making bodies often create laws and regulations based on outdated science and technology
 - Laws and regulations are inflexible and difficult to modify based on new scientific findings



Recommendations

Legislative and Regulatory Compliance

4. Support the creation of a mechanism to coordinate the legislative and regulatory activities of the administration, legislature, and various regulatory bodies (e.g. air and water quality boards).
 - There are numerous regulatory agencies with some exclusive areas of responsibilities
 - However, many of the areas of responsibility contradict, overlap, or are redundant to the efforts of other regulatory agencies
 - Net effect is additional and unnecessary expenses for the agricultural sector



Recommendations

Legislative and Regulatory Compliance

5. Support a policy that requires that an economic impact study (to be paid for by the interested regulatory body) be conducted for all proposed environmental regulations that affect agriculture.
 - Environmental impact studies often required for expansion of business or prior to new undertaking
 - Regulatory agencies are not required to perform similar studies on the economic impact of environmental rules prior to implementation
 - Economic impact of proposed regulations should be balanced with environmental standards



Recommendations

Legislative and Regulatory Compliance

6. Support the creation of an advisory committee, appointed by the Governor and representative of key agricultural stakeholders, to review and provide input on all proposed environmental, occupational safety, wage/hour and other regulations that affect agriculture.
 - Many regulatory burdens have been created unintentionally because the industry has been excluded from the rule-making process
 - Agriculture should have seat at the regulatory table
 - Provide insight and feedback on all regulations that affect the industry



Recommendations

Water

7. Support the development of additional water supplies through the construction of Delta conveyance and surface and groundwater storage facilities.
 - With the current drought facing all California users, agriculture faces the most immediate cutbacks
 - Without adequate supplies of water, California agriculture could literally become extinct in some of the largest growing areas in the state
 - California has plenty of natural water sources to meet its current and future needs
 - The problems is lack of surface and groundwater storage facilities and conveyance infrastructure
 - Comprehensive solution must include Delta habitat restoration and the protection of agricultural water rights



Recommendations Water

8. Support reform of the federal and state Endangered Species Act to provide judges with the ability to balance environmental regulations with the water needs of California consumers, both rural and urban, taking economic impacts into consideration.
 - Under the current federal ESA, judges are unable to take the economic impact of their rulings into account when rendering decisions based on the law
 - Delta smelt has prompted federal courts to cut back pumping of water through the Delta
 - Consequences of this legal ruling have already shut down many farming operations in the Central Valley or forced them to drastically reduce their acreage



Recommendations

Water

9. Support public policy measures that promote and expand urban and agricultural water use efficiency programs.
10. Support current outreach programs aimed at educating policy makers and the general public about water conservation efforts of California agriculture.
 - California farmers do not always receive credit for being among the most technologically-advanced and efficient users of water in the state
 - One of the reasons agriculture is hit first and the hardest whenever there are cutbacks in allocations
 - California agriculture is an excellent steward of the environment
 - Conservation efforts of farmers across the state should be highlighted to lawmakers, regulatory agencies, the media and the general public



Recommendations

Energy

11. Support the expansion of hydroelectric power and the development of alternative clean energy sources, including but not limited to nuclear power, liquid natural gas, solar, wind and biofuels.
 - California agriculture is highly dependent on energy and susceptible to fluctuations in energy prices and availability
 - Energy shortages jeopardize the ability of California farmers to stay in operation
 - California agriculture supports the move toward energy independence and emphasizes the development of clean and renewable energy sources



Questions or Comments

CONTACT:

Tom Nassif

(949) 885-2261

tnassif@wga.com

www.wga.com

